

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MC-02 ACDA-05

SAJ-01 TRSE-00 EB-07 OMB-01 IO-10 (ISO) W

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R 021555Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5412

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 00036

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MASS, MPOL, EAIR, IT, NATO, GW

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON FRG HELICOPTER DEVELOPMENTS

SECDEF FOR DDR&E

REFS: (A) ROME 18674 DTG 221610Z DEC 75

(B) MAAG BONN 20518 DTG 181754Z DEC 75 (NOTAL)

(C) BONN 7245 DTG 051751Z MAY 75

BEGIN SUMMARY: BONN READ EMBASSY ROME'S UPDATE ON AGUSTA A-129 HELICOPTER DEVELOPMENTS (REF A) WITH INTEREST. THE FRG TOO IS INTERESTED IN PROCURING A SECOND GENERATION ANTI-TANK HELICOPTER. THIS PROCUREMENT LIKE ITS ITALIAN A-129 COUNTERPART WILL PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE US SALES AND NATO STANDARDIZATION. THE FOLLOWING IS AN UPDATE OF FRG HELICOPTER DEVELOPMENTS SINCE LAST MAY (REF C).
END SUMMARY.

1. AS EMBASSY ROME REPORTED, THE AGUSTA-MBB JOINT
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DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR THE ITALIAN ARMY IS NOW DEAD.

ON DECEMBER 15, STATE SECRETARY MANN (UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE) APPROVED A REDIRECTED ANTI-TANK HELICOPTER PROGRAM CONSISTING OF TWO PHASES.

2. IN THE FIRST PHASE A LIMITED NUMBER OF MBB-BO 105 HELICOPTERS ARMED WITH THE HOT MISSILE SYSTEM WILL BE PROCURED. THE EXACT NUMBER IS AS YET UNCERTAIN BUT WILL PROBABLY BE BETWEEN 150-200 AIRCRAFT. WHEN THE SECOND PHASE OF THE ANTI-TANK HELICOPTER PROGRAM BECOMES OPERATIVE, THESE MBB-BO 105 HELICOPTERS WILL PROBABLY REVERT TO A LIGHT OBSERVATION HELICOPTER ROLE.

3. THE SECOND PHASE OF THE ANTI-TANK HELICOPTER PROGRAM APPROVED BY DR. MANN CONSISTS OF A NEW DEVELOPMENT EFFORT DESIGNED TO OBTAIN A HELICOPTER IN THE THREE AND ONE-HALF TON WEIGHT CLASS CAPABLE OF FLYING AND SHOOTING BOTH NIGHTTIME AND DAYTIME. IT IS TO BE INTRODUCED BETWEEN 1985 AND 1987 AND CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 200 AIRCRAFT. THE MBB-BO 115 IS NOT REPEAT NOT LOOKED UPON AS A CANDIDATE. NOR IS THE ITALIAN A-129 CONSIDERED A CANDIDATE BY FEDERAL MINISTRY OF DEFENSE (FMOD) OFFICIALS.

4. US SALES POSSIBILITIES FOR THE SECOND GENERATION SYSTEM ARE THREEFOLD (SEE REF B FOR FURTHER DETAILS):

(A) THE FIRE CONTROL SYSTEM -- SOMETHING LIKE THE AERONUTRONIC-FORD ATAFCS, NORTHROP MATADS, OR TEXAS INSTRUMENTS DAY/NIGHT FIRE CONTROL SYSTEM (A JOINT US-FRG DEVELOPMENT IS ENVISAGED);

(B) AIRFRAME -- A JOINT VENTURE WITH A NATO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 00036

PARTNER IS ENVISAGED (MANY FMOD REPS SEE ENOUGH SIMIL-
ARITY BETWEEN FRG NEEDS AND THE ADVANCED SCOUT HELI-
COPTER (ASH) PROGRAM AND THE LIGHTLY-ARMED SCOUT
HELICOPTER (LASH) PROGRAM TO FEEL THAT ONE OR THE
OTHER OF THESE US PROGRAMS MAY OFFER THE SYSTEM THEY ARE
SEEKING);

(C) THE MISSILE SYSTEM -- (WHILE THERE ARE MANY
UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS DUE TO THE RAPID GROWTH IN MISSILE
TECHNOLOGY, FMOD REPS FEEL THAT A NEW GENERATION OF
MISSILES BEYOND CURRENT TOW/HOT SYSTEMS WILL BE COMING
INTO THE FIELD TEN YEARS FROM NOW).

5. EMBASSY BONN IS, OF COURSE, IN NO POSITION TO
JUDGE WHETHER US NATIONAL INTERESTS WOULD BE BETTER
SERVED BY PROCURING THE A-129 ITALIAN LIGHT-ATTACK
HELICOPTER OR BY A JOINT US-FRG EFFORT TO DEVELOP A
NEW HELICOPTER SYSTEM. IT MERELY WISHES TO POINT OUT
THAT ANOTHER VALUED NATO PARTNER BESIDES ITALY IS
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INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH THE US IN ORDER TO PRODUCE
A SECOND GENERATION HELICOPTER.
HILLENBRAND

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